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OIT-7235-88

23 DEC 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Evaluation and Plans Staff, DO

FROM: Edward J. Maloney
Director of Information Technology

SUBJECT: System Response During Budget Exercise

REFERENCE: Our Memo (OIT-1296-88), dtd 18 Dec 88, Subject: Recent Problems With BARS Fiscal Systems

1. Your perception of the problems during the recent budget exercise is correct. Response was slow. Report printouts were often delayed, but response for batch reports was intentionally sacrificed for the sake of online users.

2. OIT's BARS Program people are working with the Office of Financial Management to assess system response for ABF, OBF, and other IDMS/R systems. We recognize that if we cannot meet peak use periods with adequate response times, the systems will be ineffective. We recently met with representatives of each Directorate, including a member of your staff, and discussed their perceptions and understanding of what happened during the exercise. I assure you that we will continue to investigate, make corrections where possible, and implement additional procedures, prior to the next exercise in February, to improve system responsiveness.



for Edward J. Maloney

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SUBJECT: System Response During Budget Exercise

25X1 C/DSG/OIT (20 Dec 88)

Distribution:

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1 - CSDD Chrono

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19 December 1988

STAT MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]
VIA: [REDACTED]
FROM: [REDACTED]
SUBJECT: [REDACTED] Memorandum

Larry,

STAT 1. [REDACTED] perception of the problems during this recent budget exercise are correct, the details as described are not quite accurate or dealt with systems other than BARS/ABF. Response was slow. Report printouts were often delayed, but response for batch reports was intentionally sacrificed for the sake of online users. Item C. in her memorandum implies poor operational response to the problems, I believe this to be more frustration than happenstance.

STAT 2. The BARS Program is working with the Office of Finance, and the appropriate OIT organizations to assess system response for ABF and other IDMS/R systems. We recognize that if we can not meet peak use periods with adequate response times, the system will appear to be a failure. We recently met with representatives of each Directorate including a member of [REDACTED] staff and discussed their perceptions and understanding of what happened during the exercise. [REDACTED] and I will continue to investigate and make corrections where possible, and implement additional procedures prior to the next exercise, in February, to attempt to improve system responsiveness.

STAT [REDACTED]

Distribution:

STAT - addressee
- [REDACTED]

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OIT/EPIS

OIT/EPIS

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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

8 DEC 1988

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Recent Problems with BARS Fiscal Systems

FROM:

C/EPIS

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

RECEIVED

FORWARDED

1.

Director OIT

2.

C/PSG

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Re: ,

Please prepare, for my signature a quickly reply acknowledging this memo

OIT/TRIS

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OIT 12-16-88

6 DEC 1988

8 DEC 1988

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Office of Information Technology

INFORMATION: Deputy Director for Operations
Deputy Director for Administration

FROM:

Chief, Evaluation and Plans Staff/DO

SUBJECT: Recent Problems with BARS Fiscal Systems

1. During the recent 14-23 November period of intensive work throughout the Operations Directorate to prepare final versions of our FY 1990/1991 Congressional Budgets, our B&F officers had many problems with the BARS system which resulted in long delays, missed deadlines, and considerable frustration. The problems encountered generally fell into three categories:

A. There were long delays in system response time both for on-line and some off-line functions, apparently because of IDMS. Response time is likely to be even slower when ABE is added to BARS.

B. There were very long delays in report printouts and the reports were not always accurate. A related problem is the very restricted on-line query capability of the system, which we feel is not as good as the FRS system it replaced.

C. It appeared that by OIT operators mixed tapes, ignored requests for user status and other requirements, or simply failed to push buttons and engage functions.

2. The following list of specific problems encountered may be of use to your office in improving service in the future:

A. The entire OFM BARS team was unavailable until mid-afternoon on 17 November as they were attending an OIT meeting. Considerable time and production was lost because systems assistance was not available.

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B. The regular CBF upload was not done on 16 November, causing a one day delay in the budget process for those offices using OBF.

C. Only active budget FANs were loaded into ABF from FRS, causing a loss of FY 88 obligations which were in non-budget FANs. As a result, CPB forms could not be balanced to our hit figures. All open FANs should be in ABF.

D. On 17 November, OIT was performing systems tests, and in the process cancelled budget report requests and did not inform requestors. On 20 November, the "J-Class" function was not activated until 1130 hours and was disabled at about 1430 hours, resulting in over-loading the report output cue and cancellation of a large number of reports without notification to the requestor. On 22 November, requests for reports were again aborted without notification to users.

25X1 E. Reports go into cue in [] Center for output
25X1 to the desired 2700 printer. All DO printers are
linked to Special Center. Each report passes through
the [] cue and is then shunted to the end of the
Special Center cue because of the printer link. This
seems to double the delay in report output. (IMS is
reviewing this problem.)

25X1 F. During the transfer of reports from [] to
Special Center, the report classification is sometimes
lost. This results in the reports being put on
security hold for lack of a classification. The
requestor is not notified that the reports are on hold
and will not be printed.

G. Reports routinely took four hours or more to run, and some were not run until overnight processing took place. This may be in part a result of the very high number of reports being requested because the ABF on-line query capability is inadequate to meet user needs. This is especially true in instances where users need to check whether a function has been effected and the result is correct, but are unable to make simple on-line checks. The on-line query capability should at a minimum be comparable to that in FRS - which itself is far too limited.

H. Problems were encountered in rolling up CPB-2 forms off-line. CPB-1 forms would be output without CPB-2 forms in some instances.

I. Off-line roll-ups took from 20 minutes (for the smallest offices) to several hours to accomplish.

J. System response time was invariably slow, often exceeding five minutes to process a statement. This appears to be a function of IDMS rather than ABF, and related to the activity of other IDMS users. The system would be equally slow with 7 ABF users on as with 20 ABF users.

K. In addition to fiscal functions, there were problems with position functions. In one instance an office position total was in balance based on on-line queries prior to night processing. During the night someone or something happened to cause a GS-grade position schedule to merge into an IS-grade position schedule, duplicating 102 GS positions and throwing the office out of balance.

L. Many response messages were incomprehensible to the user, who had to refer to the OFM Data Base Management Branch (DBMB) for a "translation". Often DBMB had to track down the problem with Special Center operating and technical personnel.

3. We understand that the Comptroller and the Director of Financial Management will also be addressing this problem with you. We offer this itemized list to assist you in identifying and correcting problems in BARS and ABF. If we can be of assistance in any way, please let us know by contacting

Chief/EPS Resource Data Branch, on